

February 27, 2023

**TO: Co-Chairs Geoff Luxenberg and Marilyn Moore and all Housing Committee Members**  
**RE: HB 6633 – FAIR SHARE PLANNING AND ZONING**

I submit this testimony in support of House Bill 6633 – concerning FAIR SHARE PLANING AND ZONING. I am a resident of West Hartford for over 20 years and a member of the Asylum Hill Congregational Church (an institutional member of GHIAA). I live in a majority white community with affordable housing constrained to specific areas in our town. During the pandemic I participated in planning a 4-part educational program co-sponsored by Leadership Greater Hartford and the University of Hartford's President's College. The program titled: "A Conversation on Race and Place" examined the relationship between racism, housing, education and economic injustice in Connecticut. Our esteemed panelists and research made clear the need for Connecticut to address fair access to affordable housing across our state!

Affordable housing is a complex problem to address requiring a multi-faceted approach including this year's proposal to employ FAIR SHARE Planning and Zoning. Connecticut has long tolerated exclusionary housing policies forcing minority citizens to live and raise children in low opportunity/underinvested communities. Data indicates that in CT 73% of the resident population in low opportunity communities are Hispanic or Black compared to just 26% White. CT has some of the highest levels of racial, ethnic and economic segregation in housing and education in the United States! Yes, our citizens can choose where they live, but not if they are dependent upon a Housing Authority and its limited jurisdiction, or a limited and geographically constrained supply of affordable housing. These are well-documented injustices.

**Why Fair Share now?** The need is great and the wait has been long since CT's passing of the Fair Housing Act in 1955! Our towns have relied on a US Supreme Court ruling in the Euclid vs. Ambler case to practice exclusionary zoning based on a racist myth. For the past 60 years CT towns have prohibited multi-family housing through local ordinances that prescribe minimum lots sizes, unit sizes, occupancy requirements, maximum height caps, parking requirements, etc. These constraints while pertinent normally exclude even the smallest 2 and 4 unit multi-family development across the state, wherein families would have access to quality education for their children and job opportunities.

Our Section 8 laws have not been successful in enabling the development of this needed housing. Only 1/2 of our 169 towns even bothered to develop the mandated Affordable Housing Plans due last year!

The Fair Share plan allocates the statewide need pragmatically across 9 regions and further to each of our 169 towns. The Fair Share plan adjusts each town's goal factoring its wealth by its grand list; its median income within the region; its percentage of housing that is multi-family; and its poverty rate. The plan also includes both incentives and enforcement. Further, the plan provides planning support to municipalities.

With the recent average 20% increase in rents in CT and the diminished construction of affordable housing over the past 40 years the supply of affordable housing is keeping Connecticut's lower income households in a financial vice.

This legislation is undoubtedly a bold step, but it is not untried or untested and has proven effective in other states. Affordable housing is essential to workers at every economic level. Connecticut's economy depends upon a diverse and educated workforce. Let's work together toward this goal.

Sincerely,  
Holly DeYoung, West Hartford, CT